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in some measure, the direct parent of the French form," a view from which Mr. Alfred Nutt expresses his dissent. The tale of "The Courtship of Ferb" occupies a secondary place in the cycle of romances treating of the heroic age of Ireland, compositions, which in their present form date from the seventh to the tenth century A. D., but are certainly based on older traditions, partly at least of pre-Christian origin. In "The Courtship of Ferb" "the supernatural is a mere incident, the tone of the story is more Homeric than mystical." The ballad version of the tale is of Ulster origin, while the prose version and some of the poems show Connaught sympathies,—the former is in the main the older. Among the personages of the story is Maev (or Medb), queen of Connaught, "the Irish Semiramis," who seems to have been a historical character, but "has finally become the Queen Mab of Spenser's 'Faerie Queene,' and of Mercutio's speech in 'Romeo and Juliet.'" Together with twenty or thirty other tales, "The Courtship of Ferb" forms the prologue to the *Tain bo Cualgne* or *Cattle Raid of Kellny*, the "Irish Iliad."

A. F. C.

FOUNDATION RITES. With some kindred ceremonies. A contribution to the study of beliefs, customs, and legends connected with buildings, locations, landmarks, etc., etc. By LEWIS DAYTON BURDICK. New York: The Abbey Press. 1901. Pp. 258.

Of wide diffusion is the custom of sacrificing a victim, with a view to promote the security of an edifice. In our own time, this is retained in the form of inserting in a corner-stone coins or documents, a usage which appears to be the survival of an original human offering. This rite, and similar ceremonies, Mr. Burdick has undertaken to illustrate by a collection of examples and citations, brought together from many sources; as appropriate mottoes, he has prefixed the biblical mention of the construction of the gates of Jericho, and the lines of Shakespeare in Henry VI. concerning him who gave his blood "to lime the stones together, and set up Lancaster." The author makes no pretence to treat exhaustively the extensive subject; he modestly gives his material as the results of a somewhat desultory reading; along with Robertson Smith and J. G. Fraser, reference is made to Grant Allen and Baring-Gould; the book is therefore by no means at first hand; yet the chapters will be found entertaining and instructive. It is part of the author's purpose to elucidate the motives which presided over the establishment of such customs. Here it seems likely that various sentiments and ideas coöperated. Without doubt, the most salient purpose was to obtain by the immuring or destruction of a victim a guardian spirit, who might tenant the building, and protect it against assaults. Thus (to add a notice not mentioned by Mr. Burdick), in the Middle Ages, and in modern times in the Orient, a saintly personage might be in danger of death at the hands of villagers, who desired to secure their locality against the loss, by travel or departure, of so powerful a friend. However, it is not to be supposed that in all cases the forfeiture of a life was part of every construction; such usage formed a ritual perfection, to which the

story would conform. The mere distrust of novelty seems partially accountable for the legends ; whoever initiated a new mode of action took a risk which would probably involve suffering. An amusing instance is cited (p. 197) in which a father, who had previously had seven girls, was presented with a first boy. He could not be persuaded to have his son christened in the new font of the new church, on the ground that the first child baptized in a new church is bound to die ; had it been a lass, it would not have mattered. In relation to customs of kindred nature, chapters are added regarding pillars, landmarks, etc.

W. W. Newell.

THE HISTORY OF IRELAND. By GEOFFREY KEATING, D. D. Vol. i. containing the Introduction and the first book of the History. Edited, with translation and notes, by DAVID COMYN, M. R. I. A. London : Published for the Irish Text Society by David Nutt, 57-59, Long Acre. 1902. Pp. xviii, 237, 17.

Neither the year of Keating's birth nor of his death is known ; between 1570 and 1650 is assumed as his period. He is honored as the introducer of the modern Irish language, as distinct from the obscure bardic style of earlier authors. He trusted and followed legends and traditions, accessible to him in manuscripts now in some part perished, and has been unjustly criticised for such confidence. The volume now printed contains his account of the origins of Irish history ; this is preceded by an apologetic introduction, in which Keating defends Ireland against calumnies (as he thinks) of ancient and modern authors. The chapters of the history relate the arrival and settlement of successive races, the children of Partholon and Neimheadh, the Firbolg, the Tuatha Dé Danann, and the sons of Mileadh. The accounts of such settlements are of course unworthy of consideration either as history or tradition, being in the main inventions of middle-Irish bards after the tenth century ; but interwoven with the record as given by Keating are a multitude of data as to proper names of localities, folk-tales, and observations in regard to custom and legend, which make the material valuable to the lover of the Irish past. For the Irish text, the editor has used all accessible MSS. A word of praise must be said as to the beauty of the form given to the work, which leaves nothing to be desired. In addition to the present volume, the Society proposes to issue during the year the first portion of the *Duanaire Fhinn*, a collection of Ossianic poetry, and has accepted an offer to edit the *Leabhar Gabhala*, or "Book of Invasions," a work as yet inaccessible. It is earnestly to be desired that the undertakings of the Society should receive substantial American encouragement. The annual fee is 7s. 6d. ; communications should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Miss Eleanor Hull, 201 Hanover Square, London.

W. W. N.